

**GLOSSARY OF UNUSUAL AND LITTLE-USED TERMS IN COLONIAL
BRITISH AMERICA:
MARYLAND
COURT RECORDS
1600s**

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PREFACE

The offer to complete this project came to my attention as a work in progress of a previous graduate student, Kevin Russell. At the time this project was presented to me it consisted of many terms, some of which were followed by brief definitions and a few assorted pictures. It was with great enthusiasm that I gladly began the undertaking of completing this project. After rewriting the complete text, completing the research, and restructuring the presentation, I hopefully leave the future researcher with a valuable tool.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James E. Jensen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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September 2003

INTRODUCTION

Historians have the job of piecing together the past from documentation and artifacts both discovered and unearthed, transcribed and reconstructed, and translated and analyzed respectively. However, once an object is found, the lengthy process of researching its story begins. This research aid is intended to assist those researching court documents from the colonial period of American history, specifically the later half of the seventeenth century. The bulk of the terms and expressions found in this glossary have been collected from hand-written documents from the area of Somerset County dating from 1665 through to 1700. Although the locus of the primary source material is specific to one county this aid will prove useful to any researcher that comes across an unusual or little-used term from the colonial period. Found in a variety of documents from inventories to wills these seemingly bizarre words come to life once the reader can attach a meaning.

Although hand-written documents in the colonial period utilize different spellings for the same word, where most are still spelled phonetically and by simply adding or dropping a letter one may find the term within this aid. To assist the researcher, colloquial variations in spelling have been included between brackets following each applicable entry. Therefore, by examining a term's meaning, in a specific context, the information found within this glossary can provide the researcher with a better understanding. In an effort to help reconstruct the past, this research aid is designed to assist the researcher in creating a biographical sketch of an individual or family by providing clues pertaining to occupations and social station. Hopefully, this glossary will facilitate research pertaining to the Eastern Shore's colonial period.

A

Adze – An implement of varying sizes with varying blades, used to hollow out wood. Usually belonging to a skilled craftsman and not a carpenter, e.g., “*To an ould adze’ was written in the cabinet maker’s inventory.*”

Alchemy spoons (occamy or occany spoons) – spoons made from an alloy of common metals and chemicals, often containing brass or copper in an attempt to resemble gold, e.g., “*she had the finest alchemy flatware on her table.*”

Allam – see **Alum**.

Alum (allam) – a chemical that was used in baking powder, to render water clear, and also for medicinal purposes, where it was taken ether internally or topically, e.g., “*Alice’s inventory listed two pounds of allam and other baking ingredients such as sugar and honey.*”

Andirons – Iron supports used to keep logs off of the chimney floor when burning also called **creepers**, e.g., “*To my sonne John I bequeath my andirons.*” See also **dogs**.

Anvil – an extremely heavy iron-shaping implement. Used by a blacksmith to pound out metal into various shapes, e.g., “*He used his smaller anvil to shape the new horse shoes.*”

Auger – a tool that was used to bore holes into wood, leather, and even the ground, e.g., “*Edward used an auger to cut into the door frame before he affixed the door.*”

Aule (aull or awl) – a tool made of iron that was used to pierce leather and was used by shoemakers and saddle makers, e.g., “*an aule and several lengths of leather string, were listed in William the shoemaker’s inventory.*”

Avoirdupois weight (averdepois) – a basic measuring system, which had one pound being comprised of sixteen ounces and each ounce therein further divided into sixteen drams.

B

Backsword – A sword with one sharpened edge, e.g., "*the boys played single-stick (fencing) with two old backswords.*"

Bandstrings – cords used to fasten collar together in front, later were ornamented with silk and lace.

Barrowes – (plural) for castrated boars or male pigs, e.g., "*John Jackson's inventory made reference to one barrowe, one sowe, and 5 pigges.*"

Beaker – a cup or glass used as a drinking vessel, e.g., "*William's inventory revealed four silver beakers.*"

Beakhorne (beakiron) – from the word beak, i) to bask in the heat 2) a iron situated over a fire from which hung boilers; **beakiron** a tool used by blacksmiths, e.g., "*since his inventory listed a beakiron, Alexander was probably a blacksmith.*"

Bedstead – a bed frame, usually made of wood with rope crisscrossed over it onto which a bolster or tick was placed, e.g., "*Richard had two bedsteads and two pillows in his inventory.*"

Bed ticking (tick or ticking bag) – a mattress made of a rough canvas or **oznaburg** fabric that was usually stuffed with straw, feathers, or rags (**Flock**), e.g., "*two ticks' were listed in the inventory of John Smith, which referred to his two mattresses.*"

Bell mettle pestle and mortar – see **mortar and pestle**.

Belmettel – an alloy of two metals, made from combining 4 parts copper to 1 part tin and was generally used in the fabrication of bells, although other uses are found, e.g., *"the inventory listed a belmettel pot and some spoons."*

Bellows – used to pump air into a fire, via a small tube, when burning fuels such as wood or coal. This process allows the fire to reach higher temperatures, e.g., *"the blacksmith labored at his bellows to get the fire hot enough to melt the iron."*

Birding piece – see **fowling piece**.

Black crepe – see **crepe**.

Bleed (Bleeding) – the practice of phlebotomy, through which it was believed that letting the blood of a sick individual run from their veins would flush out and ailment he or she suffered, also used on animals, see **fleem**, e.g., *"the doctor would often prefer to administer medicine rather than bleed his patients."*

Blood porringer – see **porringer**.

Bolster (boulster) – a thin pad that was used to lie upon. Sometimes these were used as under padding for bed ticking and were stuffed with feathers, straw, or flock, e.g., *"Margaret's inventory listed a feather boulder and two pillows."*

Bottles – a ceramic or glass container used to store liquor indoors as well as to transport liquor to the fields, e.g., *"Richard often brought a bottle when he walked out into his crop fields."*

Boutry gall – gall, or nutgall, refers to a nut-shaped swelling of plant tissue, caused by an infection of bacteria, parasite or virus, which was largely used as a commercial source of tannin, e.g., *"Mr. Robinson's inventory listed oddities such as a pair of alchemy spoons and a parcel of boutry gall."*

Branding iron – a tool that was used to permanently mark an animal with its owner's symbol done by heating up the tool so that it scar the hide, also known as a **marking iron**, e.g., *"Mr. Scarborough always had his 'X' mark branded on his cows."*

Brase sasepan (brass saucepan) – a cooking pan used either to boil or fry food that is being prepared. This particular use presents a more luxurious model when compared to the iron skillet, e.g., *"unto my sone John I bequeath my brase saucepan."*

Brazier (brasier) – a modified cooking pan, designed as a vessel for both hot coals and embers. With a tripod construction this portable element was used as a heat source for cooking, e.g., *"Mrs. Jackson loved to cook an early morning meal on her new brasier."* Also, referring to one who worked with brass, e.g., *"his inventory listed an anvil and other tools used by a brazier."*

Breeches – common early male apparel, usually tied below the knee leaving the remainder of the leg dressed in stockings, e.g., *"one handkerchief, white breeches, and one pair of old stockings were listed in Phillip Davis' inventory."*

Broadaxe – an axe that characteristically had only one broad and flat cutting edge, also known as a **goosewing** for its appearance, e.g., *"the boat's mast was hewn from a single timber with a broadaxe."*

Buckram – a stiff and course cloth, made of linen, which was put under garments to provide a stiff appearance; also, used in book binding, e.g., *"the clerk of the court had his ledger bound in buckram and not leather."*

Busk (busking) – made of either metal or the cartilage from the mouth of a whale and was used to reinforce women's stays, much like a corset, e.g., *"whalebone busking was sited in Mary's will, which she bequeathed to her sister Anne."*

Buttermold – a mold, usually made of wood, which would be used to stamp a design into a measured amount of butter as the operator depressed its plunger; e.g., *"Abigail loved to use her buttermold with the floral motif, which left the impression of a rose – her favorite flower."*

Bruckle – a term to describe something as being wet and dirty, e.g., *"his inventory lists a broken bruckle bedstead."*

C

Caddoes (caddow) – a quilt or covering made of a coarse wool, e.g., “*a yard or towe of ribbynige and a caddow’ were found listed in her inventory.*”

Cauldron (coldron) – a great pot or large kettle, which was used to cook by boiling or simmering and either hung over a fire or stood on three legs, e.g., “*his inventory revealed one small kettle and an ould cauldron with a hole.*”

Calico – an originally imported cotton cloth from Callicut, in India, sometimes designs were painted on it, e.g., “*Alice had a calico pinafore.*”

Camlet (camblet) – a beautifully rich fabric made from blending both silk and the hair of a camel, e.g., “*in his father’s will the camlet coat was left to John, Stephen’s older brother.*”

Candlestick – a candlestick was used to carry or simply anchor a candle as it burned, a common item since candles were used often for light and made of a resilient metal such as pewter, e.g., “*the inventory revealed that Caroline had two pewter candlesticks and a snuffer.*”

Cannister – a basket or other small vessel used to carry objects, also used when referring to an early artillery shell that would launch smaller projectiles from within, e.g., “*Anne had a little cannister that she used to house her extra buttons.*”

Cantharides – a plural form of cantharis, a metallic green beetle originating in central and southern Europe. Also known as *Spanish fly*, referring to the beetle, which in a dried form was used both as an aphrodisiac and as a blister ointment, e.g., “*Jonathan’s inventory listed several ointments and herbs, including cantharides, therefore he may have been a physician of sorts.*”

Canvas – usually referring to a heavy cotton or linen fabric made from flax, e.g., “*6 yards of canvas was revealed in Jane Smyth’s inventory.*”

Cart & wheels – an animal drawn device used to haul a variety of goods or other items, usually consisting of a platform of wood and a set of two wheels, e.g., *"the men would transport goods from the wharf to their homes on a horse drawn cart, since the roads were uneven."*

Cask – a vessel shaped like a barrel, constructed of staves, headings and hoops and was used to transport liquids. Also known as a hogshead, roughly the equivalent of sixty-three gallons, e.g., *"300 pounds of Chesapeake tobacco, a cask of salted troutes and a hogshead of corne to be given to my sone John Smith."*

Casque – to a protective helmet, usually worn by a soldier in times of battle to prevent injury, from the French word for hat, e.g., *"William's inventory revealed one sorry musket and a casque, perhaps he was a military man."*

Casters – a set of vials or vessels used to contain household condiments, also referring to a cloak [slang] or a hat made from beaver fur [castor], e.g., *"'one chafing dish and pewter caster' were listed in her inventory."*

Cattale bed (Cattail) – a tick stuffed with the shredded tops from a cattail, a weed that grows in marshy areas of which the roots are edible and from which the dried leaves could be used to weave baskets, e.g., *"'one feather bulster and a cattale bed' was revealed in his inventory."*

Chafing dish – a portable vessel, which was comprised of a dish that rested over a small grate of hot coals, used for heating water or keeping prepared food warm while on the table, e.g., *"among his other table-top accessories of a canister and knives and forks, Edmund mostly enjoyed his new chafing dish."*

Chamber pot – a bedroom or bedchamber vessel that was used to collect urine, e.g., *"Susan was much happier with using the chamber pot that going to the outhouse on cold nights."*

Chattel – used to describe objects that were owned by one specific individual, e.g., *"The true inventory of the property and chattel of Obedience Robins."*

Chirurgion – an early form of the modern word surgeon, a person associated with setting broken bones and limited operations such as extracting teeth, e.g., "*The inventory of John Marshall chirurgion...*"

Chisels – an edged implement used to shape wood or to make a deep cut; several types can be found from farming, wood, gooseneck, mortise, corner, paring, socket-lock, skew, and slick, e.g., "*To a parcel of chisels and an old saw.*"

Churn – used as both a noun and a verb. Made of wood, this barrel-like container was used to combine both milk and cream from which butter was made through a process of agitation, e.g., "*Alice churned butter every week, she had a wooden churn.*"

Cider house – a small one room structure, usually situated on a plantation with numerous apple trees and was used to produce cider; which is a beverage made from apples and was widely used as a substitute for water, since the eastern Shore's water was often found to have a high salinity level that causing illness.

Claw hammer – a metal tool that was used for pounding, the claw used to pull nails out; there were various types such as: claw, cobbler's, cooper's, and veneer – e.g., "*Edmund's inventory revealed one claw hammer and a parcel of nails.*"

Clothes smoothers – see **smoothing iron**.

Clyster – see **Glister pipes**.

Cobbler – one who only repaired shoes or boots and was not skilled enough to actually make either, see **shoemaker**, e.g., "*there were no shoemakers around so the local people often had the cobbler mend their old footwear.*"

Colander – metal vessel with holes in the bottom, used to drain excess water from foods after boiling, e.g., "*she tasted the soup and then upon her satisfaction brought out her colander to remove the bones before giving it to her ill father.*"

Collar and hames – usually the stuffed section (collar) of a harness that was attached to the wooden struts (hames); used by a draft animal for hauling a heavy workload, e.g., *"Stephen had to purchase a new collar and hames as his broke when his horse was pulling a load of bricks."*

Cooper's adze – see **adze**, specifically one used by a cooper, one who makes wooden vessels for either liquids or dry goods, e.g., *"the carpenter's adze was larger than the one-handed cooper's adze."*

Corded cotton – a fabric that was made from combining equal amounts of cotton and linen, which produced a corded or ribbed texture, e.g., *"Elizabeth enjoyed her new curtains of corded cotton, which she purchased in Jamestown."*

Corn hooks – see **hooks**.

Coulter – an iron knife like instrument located at the front of a plow, often used to break new lands, meaning to cut roots prior to plowing, e.g., *"John's inventory revealed two coulter and a broken colter, which suggests he had broken new land."*

Coverlet (coverlid or covrelit) – a bedspread that was used to cover a bed, although usually not falling to the floor, e.g., *"one coverlet and two old bedsteads, and two pillows."*

Creepers – See **andirons**.

Crepe – a fabric that was designed to look permanently wrinkled, e.g., *"Elizabeth wore black crepe in her hair ever since her husband died."*

Cross-cut saw (cross saw) – a saw that was designed to cut across the grain of wood and was used most commonly to fell trees, also used by a carpenter, e.g., *"one cross cutting saw and a parcel of nails."*

Cruet – a glass container or vessel, usually employed for the purpose of holding condiments on a table such as oils or pepper, e.g., *"his inventory listed a cruet and a pewter tray, therefore he was likely wealthy."*

Cupping glasses – usually in the context of phlebotomy (bloodletting), although occasionally used to refer to a Tavern’s glassware, see

phlebotomy, e.g., “*Jane placed a warmed glass over Jonas’ wound, then after cooling it, it drew forth the illness from within him.*”

Curry comb (curry brush) – a brush used to rid a horse, pony, mule, or donkey, of ticks, lice, and dirt, e.g., “*Hanna curried her horse every morning with her curry comb before ridding in the fields.*”

Cutlass (cutilax, cutlace, cutlash, curtle-ax, or kutlass) – a short broad sword with one edge, with a blade that is either straight or curved, usually refers to a naval or gentleman’s sword, e.g., “*John Russell bequeathed his cutlass to his sonn Stephen.*”

D

Damask – a very fine fabric, usually composed of linen or silk and was most often woven with a texture and used as a decorative dressing such as a tablecloth, e.g., “*One curtain & valance, one damask tablecloth, and one rug.*”

Dimitie (Dimity) – a cotton fabric, one that was both fine and corded – see **corded**, e.g., “*Richard’s inventory revealed 4 ells of Dimitie and a lot of other fabrics in large quantities, therefore he may have been a merchant.*”

Dogs (Firedogs) – used to fasten a log securely so it would not move while one either sawed it in two or placed it to burn in the fire for cooking, e.g., “*One pair of dogs with brass heads.*” See also **andirons** and **creepers**.

Doublet – predominantly a type of men’s apparel, which covered the torso from the neck to below the hips, usually without sleeves and was

characteristically close-fitting, e.g., *"John wore the same doublet for many years and being sleeveless was ideal in the warmer months."*

Dowlas – a linen fabric that was made entirely from long flax strands, see **flax**; it was a material made in Brittany and was popularized through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, e.g., *"Mathew's inventory revealed six yards of dowlas linen."*

Dram cup – a cup that measures a liquid measurement of one eighth of an ounce, also see **avoirdupois** weight, e.g., *"Margaret's recipe called for a dram cup of molasses."* Also, refers to a drink of an intoxicating beverage, e.g., *"although she was no physician, mother often said that a dram would cure any ailment."*

Draught oxen (Draft oxen) – a large mammal similar to a cow – ox; which outnumbered horses at one time, since they were cost efficient and was used for heavy work such as plowing and carrying heavy loads, e.g., *"Richard's will stated that his horse and draught ox were to be given to his son John after Richard's wife's decease."*

Drawers – an article of clothing, worn as underwear by either males or females, which covered the individual from the waist down and usually covering the legs as well as, e.g., *"on hot days his young boys would strip down to their drawers and jump into the pond to cool off."*

Drawing knife (Draw knife, Drawknife) – an edged tool with a blade and a handle on each end, which was used by pulling the tool towards the user; such as a chair bodger, a cooper, a carpenter, a wheelwright, a rake maker, a basket maker, or a gate hurdle maker, e.g., *"a drawknife and chisel were mentioned in Stephen's inventory, which suggests that he worked a lot with wood."*

Dripping pan – a cooking device, which consisted of a shallow pan with a perforated tray cover, this would allow the melted animal fat and oils to collect away from the cooking meat, e.g., *"Mary used her dripping pan for cooking the roast and collecting animal fat, with which she made soap."*

Drugget (Druggit) – a coarse cloth, which was used as a covering for furniture or carpeting; also used to describe a cotton rug that was stuffed with wool, e.g., *"Ann loved her drugget petticoat, because its woolen stuffing kept her warm."*

Drum lines – a fishing line that was predominantly used to catch Drum fish, a species found often in Eastern Shore waters.

Duffel (Duffield) – a woolen cloth with both a coarse texture and a thick nap, which was used usually in the fabrication of overcoats and blankets, e.g., *"one sorry duffel coat and an old pair of shoes was revealed in his inventory."*

Dutch box – a Dutch cupboard, a shelved unit with shutting doors.

E

Earthen plates – a plate made from clay that had been shaped and fired; see **earthenware**.

Earthenware – any tableware item or vessel made from fired clay, either decorated or plain in design, e.g., *"her inventory revealed earthen ware, trays, and earthen plates."*

F

Falling leaf table (failing table) – a table with a leaf which can be dropped and when raised could allow the table to accommodate several more individuals, e.g., *"when my daughter Elizabeth visited with my son in-law we would raise the leaf of the falling table to accommodate the numbers."*

Farthingale – usually referring to a hoop frame, which was made from whalebone and served to extend a skirt or petticoat, e.g., *"Ann wore her fabulous blue dress, which was flared out by the whalebone farthingale beneath it."*

Filly – a female horse that has not yet given birth to any offspring, see **Mare**, e.g., *"Sarah was given a filly and two foals from her grandfather's administrators."*

Fire peel – see **fire shovel**.

Fire shovel – an iron shovel that was used to remove ash and other debris from the fireplace floor, e.g., *"every morning John would employ the fire shovel to remove the mound of ash from the night's fire on the fireplace floor."*

Fireslice – see **fire shovel**.

Fire tongs – a long iron tool that was used To rearrange burning logs in the fireplace or to position a new log in a fire, e.g., *"Mary always preferred to use the fire tongs to place more wood on the fire, so as not to burn her hands."*

Firkin – 1) a small wooden container, being one quarter of a barrel in size; 2) used as a measurement for goods, also equivalent to eight gallons of liquid

or six and one half pounds of dry goods, e.g., *"the inventory of Elizabeth Smith revealed one firkin of sugar."*

Fish hookes – small metal hooks, which were often baited and used to catch both fresh and salt water fish, e.g., *"Richard's inventory listed one old boat and a parcel of fish hookes and was therefore most likely a fisherman by trade."*

Fistula – an opening similar to a canal, resulting from either disease or injury, which permits the body's fluids to drain to the surface, also seen as a tube-like pocket found in the body, e.g., *"his inventory revealed a mare with fistula, perhaps caused by a previous disease."*

Fixed – see **unfixed**.

Flagon – a large drinking vessel that characteristically had a handle and a narrow spout, which was used to serve liquids at a table or for the consumption of alcoholic beverages such as beer, e.g., *"George enjoyed visiting Shield's Tavern in Williamsburg for a flagon of ale."*

Flannel – a cloth made from wool, which had a nap on one side and was generally used for bedding or winter clothing, e.g., *"the children knew that spring had arrived when Jenny stored the flannel sheets."*

Flannelet – see **Flannel**, yet made from cotton and not wool.

Flask – a small container or bottle with a lid or stopper, which was used to store both fine powders and liquids, such as gunpowder or vinegar respectively, e.g., *"his inventory revealed one gunn and a flask of powder."*

Flaskett (Flasket) – a shallow basket or tub, or small flask, e.g., *"she used three flaskets to store her medicines and kept them in the small closet in the hall."*

Flax – the fibers extracted from a blue-flowered plant, the lengthy fibers of which were then woven into linen to produce a sturdy fabric, e.g., *"after the long process of collecting and preparing the flax fibers, Elizabeth would spin them into thread and weave them into her linens."*

Fleem (Fleames) – the tools used by a phlebotomist, on either humans or animals, to open a blood vein and bleed a patient, see **lancets**, e.g., *"James' inventory revealed a parcel of fleames and a blood porringer."*

Flesh fork(Flesfork) – a large hooked iron fork that was used to either remove or rotate meat cooking in a pot, e.g., *"Sambo would use the flesh fork to handle the meat, which he would then carve and serve to the household."*

Fleshhook – see **flesh fork**.

Flitches of bacon – a unit of measurement that was reserved for expressing an amount of bacon meat.

Flock – rags or other unused scraps of linen and cloth, e.g., *"she had to re-stuff her flock bed after many years of use."*

Foal – a newborn horse, without making reference to the sex of the animal, see **Mare**, e.g., *"Stephen's inventory revealed a mare with foal."*

Fodder – animal feed that was stored for the winter months, usually referring to a bundle of dried grasses, e.g., *"the slaves worked hard on the plantation to prepare animal fodder during the fall months."*

Footwarmer – a small metal box that was usually attached to the base of a desk, into which hot coals and ash were placed to warm the feet an individual, e.g., *"the court clerks would often employ their footwarmers during colder months, because the fireplace was not efficient enough to heat the entire room."*

Fowling piece (Fowler or Birding piece) – a long barreled gun with a large bore, similar to a musket, which enabled it to be loaded with birdshot, i.e. several small round lead pellets, as in a shotgun, e.g., *"John taught his eldest son how to use his fowling piece, for hunting ducks, by the age of ten."*

French Falls – a low leather shoe worn by either men or women and being of superior quality, e.g., *"Jonathan left his new French falls to his cousin Jonas."*

Freteg pillow – an embroidered pillow, fret is archaic for both embroidered and tore-up.

Froe (Frow) – a tool used by woodworkers, specifically a wooden-handled blade that was positioned at a ninety degree angle and was used to cut shingles or other narrow stripes of wood from a larger block, often used by makers of baskets and hoops, e.g., "*Jonas spent a whole day with his froe in order to have enough shingles for the new cider house.*"

Fustian – a fabric that was made up of forty percent linen and sixty percent cotton, which was usually lightly brushed on one side and used predominantly for clothing, e.g., "*John's favorite shirt was his white fustian work shirt.*"

G

Galloon – a decorative trim that was applied to clothing, usually made from a combination of cotton or wool to silk and occasionally had either silver or gold thread woven in, e.g., "*The blue pinafore with a yellow gallon was Anne's newest and most prized article.*"

Gimlet – a small wooden-handled tool, with a metal screw tip, which was used to bore small holes into wood, e.g., "*George had to use his gimlet instead of his auger, since the later would have bore to large a hole.*"

Gimp – either a glazed coarse thread or a decorative trim made from either wool, cotton, or silk with a thin metal wire running through it, e.g., "*Elizabeth's dress was trimmed with gimp, from the edges down to her pockets and even on the buttons.*"

Gimp buttons – decorative buttons that are covered in gimp, see **gimp**.

Glister pipes (Glyster or Clyster) – specifically pipes or syringes that were employed to administer an enema; an injection through the anal orifice, which was commonly thought to have curative properties, e.g., *"his inventory listed glister pipes and several medicine bottles, perhaps Richard was ill for some time."*

Glut – a wooden wedge, see **Wedge**.

Glyster – see **glister**.

Gouge – a metal chisel that had a characteristic rounded blade, which was used to remove large or small rounded chunks of wood and was often used by wood craftsmen when making chairs, bowls, or carvings, e.g., *"the inventory of John Smith carpenter revealed a parcel of chisels and gouges along with an adze."*

Goosewing – see **broadaxe**.

Grater – a metal tool that was used in food preparation to produce tiny slivers of either vegetables or spices, such as carrots or nutmeg, e.g., *"the children were always excited when they could smell the grated nutmeg in the kitchen – it meant pumpkin pie."*

Great chest – large chest for clothing, usually located in the Great Room.

Grindstone – a foot-powered device consisting of a large and flat disk-like wheel of natural sandstone, which when put into a revolving motion upon its axis could be used to sharpen tools such as an axe or knife, also used to smoothen rough metal objects, e.g., *"his inventory listed one sorry grindstone, which probably meant that it had seen much use."*

Grubbing hoe – a heavy hoe that was used to break ground, it consisted of a long wooden handle with a flat and broad blade placed at ninety degrees to the handle, which would sever to soften up the soil in order to prepare the ground for a new planting season, larger than a weeding hoe – see **weeding hoe**, e.g., *"in the inventory of Ambrose Dixon several farming tools are listed from one grubbing hoe to two axes."*

Gunter's chain – see **surveyor's chain**.

H

Hackell (hackle, hatchel, or hetchell) – a tool used to extract flax fibers from the stem of the plant; usually consisting of a long and slender wooden board, which had long metal teeth arranged in a close grouping, e.g., *“before spinning the flax into thread it had to be combed by hand with a hackle.”*

Hair sifter – a perforated device that was used to remove hair from a liquid, e.g., *“after milking the cows they would pour the milk through a hair sifter to remove any loose hairs.”*

Halter – A rope, with a noose or headstall, to which horses or cattle are led from or fastened to.

Hame – one of a couple curved parts of a harness used for heavy draft animals; usually made of either wood or metal, which were used to attach the traces, e.g., *“Richard was pleased to see that his son had polished the hames of his Clydesdale.”*

Harrow teeth – the tines of a harrow, either made of wood or iron these would be attached to a wooden frame (i.e. a harrow) and then drawn across plowed ground, which further prepared the land for planting, e.g., *“Edmund didn’t own a harrow, but every year he would rent one from his neighbour and have his draught horse fitted to it.”*

Hemp – a coarse fiber that was spun into thread, similar to flax, yet it came from a tall corn-like plant and was used for its durability in cloth, rugs, and rope, e.g., *“Ephraim’s inventory listed both a hemp rug and twenty-feet of hemp rope.”*

Hetchell – see **hackell**.

Hogshead – an early unit of measurement, usually a cask or barrel containing sixty to 140 gallons of liquid or 750 to 1,200 lbs of tobacco, e.g.,

"To my wife I do bequeath 300 pounds of tobacco and unto my sonn John one hogshead of Tobacco."

Hide trusses – Wooden structure to support and hold hides or skins as they dry.

Hilling hoe – see **weeding hoe**.

Holland – in the context of fabric, it refers to a commonly used linen; originating in Holland, this material was used in the fabrication of handkerchiefs and breeches, e.g., *"6 yards of Holland was revealed in the merchant's inventory."*

Hone – a whetstone used for giving a fine edge to razors and cutting tools.

Hooks – referring to any one of an assortment of reaping hooks, such as a corn hook or rice hook, e.g., *"the inventory of Richard Williams listed corn hooks among his other farming tools."*

Hornebooke (hornbooks or horn-book) – an early teaching aid used for school children, constructed from a wooden board with a piece of parchment onto which was written common references such as the alphabet, numbers, and rudimentary fractions; and, to protect the writing a thin translucent overlay of horn was applied, e.g., *"Nathan fell while running home from the school house, but luckily he did not break his hornbook again."*

Horse flemmes – see **fleem**.

Huck (Huckaback) – a durable cloth made either solely from linen or blended with cotton and was known for its characteristic uneven surface.

I

Indian – 1) the native indigenous peoples of North America, 2) also, used to describe characteristics or items commonly found in the possession of these early inhabitants; such as to move in Indian file, meaning single file, or Indian matte and Indian bowl, which describe a small floor mat or handmade bowl respectively, e.g., “*Samuel’s inventory listed one Indian bowle and one Indian Matte, therefore he perhaps traded with the local Indians.*”

Inkhorn – a device used to hold and transport writing ink, named for the animal horn from which it was originally constructed, e.g., “*Mr. Mitchell’s inventory revealed an inkhorn and plume, which suggests that he was literate and could write.*”

Iron – See **smoothing Iron**.

Iron Wedge – See **wedge**.

J

Jack – several definitions apply: 1) as a tool, it refers to one that helps in the removal of boots or as a support to assist in sawing wood, 2) as a mechanical device, referring to one powered by hand and used to turn a spit or for use in mines, as well as an individual who would strike the bell of a clock-tower 3) as a measure, it refers to an amount measuring one quarter to half a pint, also as a variation of a farthing, 4) as a vessel, it refers to either a decorated flask or a cup made of waxed leather, e.g., “*his inventory referred to a jack,*

yet in its context of a 'jack of spermaceti' it meant a measure of whale byproduct."

Jewsharpe – a musical instrument, much used in Colonial times, which was made of metal and played by holding the instrument between in the mouth and strumming it with a thumb.

Joiner tools – the tools used by one who joins wood together through the use of glue and joints; a trade that required the craftsman to know the properties of wood, including how it would expand and warp, therefore important in the manufacturing of furniture, e.g., "*George's new joiner tools were secondary to his acquired skill.*"

K

Keeler – a shallow tub, which was usually made of wood, e.g., "*Elizabeth washed clothes in a keeler, instead of going down to the river.*"

Kenting (kentine) – a cloth, specifically a fine linen fabric, which had its origins in Kent, England, e.g., "*Rebecca favored her blue kenting dress over her other apparel.*"

Kersey – a common coarse woolen fabric, sometimes blended with cotton, which was combined into narrow ribbed lengths and used to make stockings, petticoats, and outer garments, e.g., "*Alice had kept her excess kersey, totaling 2 ells, to make a great coat for her son.*"

Kiddles – A barrier that was placed in a river with one opening used to channel fish into a net.

Kutlass – see **cutlass**.

L

Lancets – surgical instruments, usually a long pointed metal lance-like knife, used to open an infected wound, boil, or blister, see **phlebotomy**, e.g., *“during the seventeenth century medical knowledge was limited, therefore wounds were bled, but the lancets themselves were never sterilized.”*

Lathorne (lanthaorn) – a lantern, this variation was commonplace in colonial times, e.g., *“Mary used her lathorne whenever she entered one of the outhouses after dusk.”*

Lathen (Lathing) hammer – a hammer to use with a lathe.

Linen – a cloth available in varying grades that was made from flax, see **flax**, e.g., *“Margaret made a beautiful tablecloth from excess coarse linen, but she reserved the best linen for making her husband a shirt.”*

Linsey-Woolsey – a combination of linen and wool, usually homespun and most commonly used to create a warm and durable cloth for coats or quilts, e.g., *“Derek preferred his linsey-woolsey coat on cold February days.”*

Looking glass – a mirror, e.g., *“Rachel’s inventory revealed a small looking glass.”*

Loom and gears – a machine used to weave rugs or fabric by interlacing identical or different thread combinations; the moving parts of this device were termed gears, e.g., *“the local weaver was skilled and could weave together cotton with wool and anything else you could request with the help of his loom and gears.”*

M

Mantua (Mantle) – 1) an Italian fabric made from silk; 2) a light ladies gown or negligee, which remained strapless, e.g., “*Tabitha’s inventory listed a green silk mantua among her numerous mantles.*”

Mare – a female horse that has had offspring; otherwise it was known as a filly, see **filly** and **foal**; e.g., “*John Williams bequeathed his horse and mare to his eldest son and he bequeathed a filly and two foal to his granddaughter.*”

Marking Iron – see **branding iron**.

Match coat – a mantle, or wrap, made of either coarse wool or fur, e.g., “*Mary’s inventory listed an old petticoat and a match coat.*”

Mallet – a wooden hammer-like tool, sometimes made of leather, used to pound soft surfaces, e.g., “*the inventory of Samuel Smith revealed several mallets, perhaps he was a cabinetmaker.*”

Maul (mawl) – an all wooden tool, being similar to a hammer, but shaped like a pestle, which was used either for driving wedges or piles into logs or lengthwise to split logs into rails, e.g., “*as opposed to letting the younger boys wield an axe to split firewood, Charles would let them maul logs into a burnable size.*”

Maul rings – the metal hoops, or bands, placed on a maul to ensure its woodenhead would not shatter and splinter through use, e.g., “*in order to prolong the life of his mauls, Stephen had them fastened with maul rings.*”

Mortar – a restraining device, which was used to hold and secure individuals being beaten; most commonly used in the context of seafarers, e.g., “*Mr. Walker’s man was being beaten at the mortar in his master’s house.*”

Mortar and pestle – an item commonly found, consisting of a bowl usually made of a hard material like stone or baked clay and a firm handled grinder.

Also written as **bell mettle pestle and mortar** or **pestle and mortar**, e.g., *"Alison used her earthenware mortar and pestle to grind up mint before adding it to her tea."*

Milk House – an outhouse located on an estate that was used to store milk after it had been taken from the dairy cattle, see **outhouses**, e.g., *"the view and estimate listed a sorry Milk House with boards."*

Milk keeler – see **keeler**.

Murthered – a variation of murdered, e.g., *"the inventory of Jane Jackson, murthered by Indians..."*

Musket – a long gun with no riffling, meaning it had a smooth bore, e.g., *"one of the earliest popularized personal firearms was the musket, made popular in the sixteenth century, but later replaced by the rifle."*

Muslin – a fabric made from fine cotton, usually with a plain weave, e.g., *"Mary had a new muslin apron made for her daughter."*

N

Nest of drawers – also called a chest of drawers.

Noggin – 1) a vessel used for drinking, resembling a pitcher, being made from one solitary piece of wood; 2) also, a measurement of one half of a cup, e.g., *"the inventory listed a noggin, which probably meant that the deceased, at one time, used to drink ale."*

O

Osnaburg (Oznabruggs, Oznaburg) – coarse canvas-like fabric made of linen, originating from Osnabruck in Germany, e.g., "*Robert's inventory listed several yards and ells of various fabrics, among them osnaburg and silk; perhaps he was a store owner.*"

Occomy spoons (occany spoons) – see **Alchemy spoons**.

Ould (old) – used to categorize an object as having been heavily used and therefore of less value than when it was first crafted, e.g., "*many early inventories listed items as being ould because the owner did not wish to pay much in taxes.*"

Outhouses – Once a common site on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, these small buildings would be erected within the vicinity of the main dwelling house, where each would serve a specific function; during early colonial times this term was not used only for an outdoor toilet, e.g., "*the main dwelling house and outhouses were in need of little repair after the storm.*"

P

Paragon – 1) a fabric made from double camblet, which was used in upholstery and clothing; 2) also marble, being black in color; 3) sometimes used to describe a rather large and perfectly rounded pearl; e.g., "*being always very tongue-in-cheek, Richard bought his wife a paragon bodice as well as a paragon pearl necklace.*"

Paste – a man-made mixture of both lead and glass, combined to create imitation diamonds and other stones of magnificent brilliance, e.g., "*Rebecca had a beautiful paste powder box that was the envy of her younger sisters.*"

Paste board powder box – see **paste** and **powder box**.

Penknife (pen knife) – small pocketknife that was used to split a goose feather into a writing plume, e.g., "*the inventory listed ink and a penknife, perhaps she was literate.*"

Pennistone – a coarse woolen fabric, originally made in Pennistone, England, which was used for clothes – specifically linings, e.g., "*Thomas had his double-breasted coat lined with pennistone.*"

Peruke (peruque or perruque) – a wig, which was worn by men, e.g., "*the inventory of Samuel Horsey listed a new peruke and wig block.*"

Pestle and mortar – see **mortar and pestle**.

Phlebotomy – the medical practice by which bleeding a patient was believed to rid the body of ailments, see **bleed**, e.g., "*the Governor always called on his physician to bleed him when a bout of gout struck him.*"

Pillion – 1) a woman's saddle, which was lighter than a man and was mostly cushion; 2) also used to describe a cushion placed behind a man's saddle, used to accommodate a woman, e.g., "*Elizabeth's inventory revealed a pillion, which she most likely employed to cushion her while riding a horse.*"

Pillowbere (pillowbeare, pillowber, pillowbeer, or pillowheer) – a pillowcase, a large linen pocket used to cover a pillow, e.g., "*the inventory listed a bedstead, sheets, and three pillows and pillowberes.*"

Pinafore(pin-a-fore) – a long apron worn atop clothes; which was pinned at the top and in the front, directly to the wearers clothes, e.g., "*the pinafore was so named because it was fastened by pins to the fore of a dress or shirt.*"

Pincers (pinchers or pinsers) – tools used by either a blacksmith or farrier, which being tong-like are used to handle hot metal, e.g., "*the farrier used his pincers to manipulate the hot metal he used to make horseshoes.*"

Plane – a woodworker’s tool of varying types used to finish the surface of wood, it consists of a wooden block with an adjustable blade placed at a specific angle to shave a piece of wood to achieve a desired surface, the most common being a smoothing plan, but others such as a beading, molding, trying, trueing, long, rabbet, jack, sun, and plow also existed, e.g., “*Thomas’ inventory listed several different types of planes and other tools, perhaps he worked with wood as either a carpenter or wheelwright.*”

Plow shaire (plow shares or plow sheers) – the front end of any plow, referring specifically to the edge that breaks the ground, e.g., “*one pair of sorry old plow shares were listed in the inventory.*”

Pollecy shoes – wooden shoes from Holland.

Porringer – a dish with a raised edge, like a shallow short-handled pan, which was used to eat daily meals including stews and liquids. Variations were used including blood porringer and others that listed the materials from which they were made, such as a pewter or wood porringer, e.g., “*James Talbot must have had some wealth, since his will mentioned the distribution of several pewter items from candlesticks to porringers.*”

Portmantle (portmanteau) – 1) luggage or a traveling bag, specifically one employed for the purpose of carrying clothing, which was bisectonal and hinged in the middle; 2) also used to describe a place to retire one’s jacket or coat referring to a coat rack, e.g., “*the presence of a leather portmantle among his inventory items might suggest that he traveled often.*”

Pot hook (pothook, pot brake, pot claw, pot clip, pot crook, or pot hanger) – see **trammel**.

Pot rack (pot racks) – a rack used to hang pot while not in use, either in a freestanding form or built to hang on a wall, e.g., “*William had the blacksmith make a pot rack so that he could free up some space near the fireplace.*”

Powder and shot – the gunpowder and lead balls used as ammunition for early muskets or rifles, these lead spheres came in varying sizes, starting

from the larger grape and buck sizes to the smaller goose and bird denominations, e.g., *"the powder and shot from colonial times lost dominance once the modern bullet appeared, since the later combined the previous multi-step preparation with one simple round."*

Powder box – a small box used to contain cosmetic powders, such as talcum powder, but could also be used to carry gunpowder, e.g., *"Stephen powdered his wig by using some talcum from his wife's powder box."*

Powdering tub – a long and deep wooden container, a food-preparing vessel into which was placed meat in order to have it salted or pickled, e.g., *"Jane could salt the meat from three of the slaughtered pigs simultaneously in her powdering tub."*

Psalter – book that contained psalms for use in prayer, e.g., *"within Christopher's will, his Psalter was bequeathed to his only child Elizabeth."*

Punch – 1) a tool used to remove a pin or nail from a hole, to create a decorative design in wood, leather, or metal, or to make a hole; which was usually used by a blacksmith, saddler, or mason; 2) also the name of a spirit enhanced beverage with a high alcohol content, e.g., *"the saddler took his punch and hammered a new hole in his leather belt to make it more accommodating since his weight loss."*

Puncheon – specifically a descriptive term used to qualify wood used in constructing something that was not required to have a smooth and finished surface, as simply a split log it often refers to: 1) a heavy lumber, which was used for planks in flooring or exterior walls; or 2) a large cask used in storing wine or ale, e.g., *"the cider house's dirt floor was often flooding so Michael installed a puncheon floor to raise the floor a few inches."*

R

Rachette pot hook – a pot hook that is designed to allow the user to pour out the contents of a pot without removing the pot from the hook, see **trammel**, e.g., *"her inventory listed a rachette pot hook and other conveniences such as a warming pan and hand mill."*

Rapier – a sword, specifically one with an elongated, slender, and straight blade, e.g., *"since the inventory listed a rapier and one musket, Samuel had perhaps served in the military."*

Reap hook (reaping hook) – a farming tool, composed of a long slightly curved wooden handle with a curved blade on the end, most commonly used in harvesting grain, see **sickle**, e.g., *"one old reaping hook was revealed in Mathew's inventory, he probably grew wheat on his land."*

Relict – a widow, or widower, a woman who has out-lived her spouse; a term usually used to refer to a man's wife that had previously married, but that her previous husband is now deceased, e.g., *"Ambrose Dixon married Mary the relict of Henry Peddington."*

Reel (rele) – a hand operated revolvable device upon which thread or yarn is wound as it is spun on a spinning wheel, e.g., *"one spinning wheel and reel were found listed in Rebecca's inventory."*

Riddles – a sieve with a coarse mesh, see **sieve**, e.g., *"one sifter, one old cauldron, one iron kettle, and a riddle."*

Roanoak – Indian currency, either a length of tobacco or shells.

Roumall (romal or rumal) – a fabric, usually of silk or of a fine cotton, from India, e.g., *"Henry received a romal handkerchief as a parting gift from his brother Phillip."*

Round shave – a tool used by either a besom maker or cooper, to finish a wooden broom or wooden barrel, e.g., “*James’ inventory listed an adze and one round shave.*”

Ruches – frill of lace, ribbon or gauze used to ornament a part of dress.

Ruff – linen worn around one’s neck, as a neckpiece, usually heavily starched to create a rigid and firm appearance, e.g., “*the king had once posed for a portrait wearing a white ruff with a black coat for four hours while the painter worked.*”

Rundlet (runlet) – a small wooden barrel or keg, usually containing fifteen gallons, e.g., “*whenever a new ship came to dock Mitchell was always willing to bargain for a rundlet of rum.*”

Rushia leather (Russian leather) – leather made from skins that have been tanned with the bark of oak, birch, and willow trees; the tanner would also apply birch oil to the underside to keep the leather from drying out, e.g., “*Alice would often brag about her new Russian leather chairs.*”

Russell – a ribbed or corded fabric, usually made with a cotton warp and woolen weft.

S

Safeguard – usually referring to a woman’s horse-riding apparel, it was simply an over-petticoat used to shield the gown beneath it from the elements during travel, also known as a weather-skirt – see **weather skirt**, e.g., “*Mary did bequeath her new safeguard and horse to her daughter Hanna.*”

Salt tub (salting tub) – see **powdering tub**.

Scane winder – octagonal wheel used to make thread.

Sconce – a candlestick, 1) usually one made to be affixed to a wall, sometimes employing a mirror to add additional reflected light and decoration; 2) a group of candle sticks; 3) a flat-based candlestick with a handle to facilitate transportation and catching dripping wax; 4) sometimes used to refer to a candlestick or lantern enveloped with screening, e.g., “*a parcel of candles and a pair of brass sconces.*”

Seal – see **wax seal**.

Seale ring – see **signet ring**.

Serge – a fabric made of fine linen or wool, sometimes a worsted fabric of silk, see **worsted**, e.g., “*William’s inventory listed a serge coat and two shirts.*”

Shag – a woolen cloth used to line cloaks or to make rugs, which had a soft appearance like fur.

Shallop – a boat, either open or half-decked, that was usually used for fishing or transporting goods in shallow waters near the shore; this one or two mast boat would be rowed or sailed, e.g., “*Randolph’s inventory listed a shallop, therefore he was most likely a waterman or a merchant.*”

Shant – a unit of measure used to qualify a liquid a being of one quart, e.g., “*the jury men would retire to the tavern for a shant of beer after every day at court.*”

Shaving horse – a device used by a woodworker that would enable the craftsman to secure a piece of wood while working the surface, e.g., “*the cooper made a new shaving horse for the use of his apprentice.*”

Shoat – a young hog, usually one weighing between 100 to 180 pounds, e.g., “*his inventory listed one cow, one mare, and four shoats.*”

Shoemaker – one who made shoes and boots by trade, see **cobbler**, e.g., “*Thomas was the only shoemaker in James City.*”

Shot – see **Powder and shot**.

Sickle – a tool composed of a short wooden handle and a semicircular curved blade, was commonly used to cut grain, grasses, and weeds, see **reap hook**, e.g., *“Isaac often had the chore of cleaning the weeds out from around the fence with a sickle.”*

Sieve – a hoop with a mesh across one side thereby creating a strainer used to separate solids from a liquid, e.g., *“Sarah had an old sieve that had a mesh made of hair.”*

Sifter – a device made of either wood or metal, usually used in food preparation, which was little more than a pan with a mesh in the bottom to allow small-granulated substances or liquids through, to either aerate or separate liquids from solids, e.g., *“Samantha would always lighten her flour in a sifter before adding it to a recipe, since it was stored tightly packed.”*

Signet ring – a ring, usually with the initials of the bearer, sometimes containing a symbol, which was pressed into soft wax or clay to seal a document, see **wax seal**, e.g., *“Thomas Parsons had a signet ring with the initials ‘TP’.”*

Sillabub (sillibub or syllabub) – a drink, 1) usually a mixture of either cider or wine with milk, thereby forming a curd; 2) sometimes referring to a sweetened cream that had been beaten till the point of froth, which was flavored with wine, e.g., *“Elizabeth was known for her sweet syllabub that remained the favorite of all pallets.”*

Skimmer – a tool used in food preparation, which consisted of a long-handled shallow metal pan, that would be used to remove the top layer of fat, grease, or bones from liquids, occasionally found with a removable perforated lid, e.g., *“Mary used her skimmer to rid the stew of the accumulated oils and fat which she put aside for later use in candle making.”*

Smoothing iron (Smoother or Clothes Smoothers) – usually made of iron, though sometimes brass, this metal device with a latched cover was filled with hot coals and employed for the purpose of riding a garment or

cloth of wrinkles, e.g., *"Mary always smoothed the boys shirts for Sunday's mass."*

Snuffer – usually a long handled metal device with a small cup-shaped compartment used either to trim candlewicks or to extinguish the flame through suffocation, e.g., *"each and every night the candles were snuffed with the brass snuffer, since unattended candles usually resulted in fires."*

Sorry – used to describe an object as either being in need of repairs or as being in a poor condition, e.g., *"a view and estimate of the orphans property described a sorry milk house and a rotten corn stack."*

Spermaceti (Spermacoti) – a white and waxy whale byproduct, which was used in the fabrication of candles, as well as in ointments, e.g., *"Alice was thrilled when John returned home with a gift of spermaceti candles."*

Staves – slender pieces of wood that would be joined at their edges to form curved surfaces, such as the sides and lining of ships or in constructing a barrel, e.g., *"a parcel of staves was found listed among woodworking tools in his inventory."*

Steelyards – a portable scale device hung horizontally, from either the holder's hand or a hook, consisting of moveable weights resting upon a calibrated arm, e.g., *"they would suspend the stillyards from a hook to weigh tobacco in excess of fifty pounds."*

Stillyards (stilliards) – see **steelyards**.

Stocklock (stock lock) – a lock that would be attached to the front face of a door and sheltered within a small wooden case, e.g., *"he laughed and said that it was the stock lock's box that kept out the rain that would rust, but only the lock that's thought tough enough to keep out the rest."*

Stuff – any unfinished cloth or fabric, usually referring to wool cloth that is either twilled or not, e.g., *"one pillow, one old quilt, and stuff."*

Surveyor – one who accurately locates land with designated meets and bounds, such as a marked tree or river and later with degrees and minutes, thereby providing the exact co-ordinates of a specific point of reference, e.g.,

"the court document stated the Phillip Quinn was leaving his brother Charles Quinn surveyor in his stead, as attorney."

Surveyor's chain – a unit of measurement containing sixty-six feet, used by a surveyor; also known as a gunter's chain, e.g., *"the inventory of Charles Quinn listed a surveyor's chain and books of maps."*

Surveyor's measure – see **surveyor's chain**.

Swizzle – a beverage made from mixing ale with beer, e.g., *"John always stirred his swizzle with a spoon before drinking it."*

T

Tallow – animal fat that was boiled, then molded, and used in making either candles or soap, e.g., *"Mary usually burnt her tallow candles when she dinned alone, thereby saving her nicer candles for visitors."*

Ticking (tick) – See **bed ticking**.

Tomak (tombac) – a term used to describe a copper and zinc alloy, which characteristically had a gold color and was used in the fabrication of inexpensive jewelry, e.g., *"the young girls often wore their tombac necklaces, although they did not seem concerned with the fact that it turned their skin green."*

Tongs – a tool commonly made of metal that consists of two hinged handles, which is used to pickup or restrain an item; usually used by a blacksmith to orientate hot iron while working it, e.g., *"John used his iron tongs to restrain the hot iron rod while he hammered the glowing red end into a blade."*

Tow cloth – a coarse linen cloth made from fifty percent tow, the shorter fibers found in flax; usually this material was used to make durable bags and clothing for slaves, see **flax** see **dowlas**, e.g., *"the plantation owner would*

have his clothing made form dowlas, whereas his servants' clothes were made form the cheaper tow linen."

Traces – the equipment used to enable a draught animal to haul a load, specifically the pieces that extend from the yoke to the actual load; see **hame**, e.g., *"the new leather traces were used in the spring to replace the old battered ones."*

Trammel – an "S" shaped iron hook, also referred to as a pot hook, which was used to suspend a pot or kettle over a fire; linking several together would enable the cook to vary the amount of heat, whereby raising the pot or kettle would enable it to simmer farther from the flame, e.g., *"on every cold morning we would find a nice warm porridge hanging on a trammel."*

Trencher – a medium sized shallow plate, usually made of wood, which was used to serve meat and other carve able foods.

Trundle bedstead (Truckle bed) – a bed frame with a shallow construction enabling it to be stored beneath a regular bedstead, sometimes with wheels to assist in its storage, e.g., *"during the day the trundle bedsteads were stored to increase the useable area of the floor."*

Turkey leather chairs – a wooden framed chair covered in an oil-tinted leather, e.g., *"John's inventory revealed four turkey leather chairs and a small round table."*

Twibil (Twilbil) – a tool with twin metal chisel heads set perpendicular to a wooden handle, this "T" shaped implement was used to cut mortises, e.g., *"a twibil listed in an inventory is strong evidence that the owner was a mason."*

U

Unfixed – either fixed or unfixed were used to describe a mechanical device, such as a gun, as being either in good working order or not, e.g., “*his inventory contained one musket and one unfixed gunn.*”

V

Valance – a decorative widow trim that was usually found atop the window, concealing the curtain hooks; also found as a decorative trim encircling the canopy of a bed, e.g., “*Elizabeth was extremely pleased when her husband allowed her to purchase the material to make a matching curtain and valance ensemble.*”

Verdegrease copperas (Verdigris) – a copper compound that was used as either a blue or green dye, depending on the mixture; also used as a medical ointment for blemishes of the skin, e.g., “*the physician prescribed verdegrease for Joshua’s skin eruption.*”

W

Wainscot – a wooden paneling, usually of hardwood such as oak, hickory, or chestnut; which was used most commonly to line the bottom half of the walls in a room or hall with heavy traffic, also used to describe a chair or chest with hardwood panels, e.g., *"his inventory listed wainscot furniture, which was among his most valuable chattel."*

Waistcoat (Weskit or Wescot) – a vest, a small garment that covers the torso, but not the arms; also used to describe an ornamental undergarment worn beneath a man's doublet, e.g., *"the inventory revealed one shirt, one waistcoat, and a pair of new French falls."*

Warming pan – a shallow metal pan with a hinged lid into which was placed hot coals; this would have most commonly been used to heat up a bed prior to sleeping, although occasionally refers to a pan used to warm food, e.g., *"the inventory listed one warming pan, one bedpan, and one quilt."*

Wax seal – the personal and individualized symbol used by the person named in a document whereby the impressed image from a seal ring, once pressed into softened wax, confirmed the person named as either the authorizing entity or as confirming the execution of the document; commonly used in the time before literacy was common place, see **signet ring**, e.g., *"Ambrose placed his seal on his last will and testament, as did the two witnesses."*

Weather skirt – see **safeguard**.

Wedge (Iron Wedge) – this triangular device, most commonly made of metal, was either used to split wood or used in joining; when made of wood, it was used to keep a door ajar or used in joining as well, see **glut**, e.g., *"Michael used a small iron wedge to affix his new axe head to the handle,*

since the wedge would push out against the wooden handle thereby holding the blade firm."

Weeding hoe – a farming implement, usually a hand operated tool, which consisted of a wooden handle and a both broad and flat metal blade, placed at a right angle to the shaft of the handle and was used to sever the roots of weeds enabling for their easy extraction from the soil, e.g., *"one of the chores the children had was to clear the garden of weeds with the weeding hoe."*

Whorekill hatt – a hat from the area of the Whorekill River in Delaware possibly a beaver skin hat.

Wicker Voider – a basket used in clearing a table after a meal, into which was placed the used napkins, plates, and flatware etc., specifically to a basket made from pliable willow branches, known as wickerwork, e.g., *"Alice enjoyed the efficiency of her wicker voider when it came time to clear away the dishes."*

Wimble – a tool that was used to either bore a hole in the earth, like an auger, or for twisting ropes for binding hay, e.g., *"Stephen's will referenced several gardening tools, including a hoe and a wimble, and was signed 'his mark,' therefore he was most likely illiterate and a farmer."*

Woolen cards – a small hand-held implement made of leather that contained many wire-like teeth, which was used to comb out wool, cotton, or flax prior to being spun, e.g., *"Mary had woolen cards and several yards of fabric listed in her inventory, perhaps she spent a lot of time making clothing."*

Worsted (woosted) – a high quality woolen yarn, named after the town of its origin in England. It usually refers to any article of cloth, made from the woolen fabric, which is characterized by its a smooth finish, e.g., *"Elizabeth had a worsted petticoat that remained the envy of her friends."*

Y

Yearling – a term for any animal that has lived for one year, but not yet reached twenty-four months from its date of birth; usually referring to either a horse or a cow, e.g., “*On his deathbed Edward gave oral instructions to leave his two yearling calves to his daughter Elizabeth.*”

Throughout the existing records of early British colonial America several words appear in a wide variety of spellings. These varying spellings occur due to the phonetic basis used by early clerks and other writers, thereby leaving spelling affected by the individual's pronunciation and perhaps accent. However, it would remain outside the scope of this research aid to contain an exhaustive list and therefore only the most commonly misspelled words appear below.

<u>Modern Spelling</u>	<u>Phonetic Variant</u>
Old	Ould, Awd
Son	Sonne, Sone
Draft	Draught
Cow	Coww, Cowe

To further assist researchers a list of common measurements used in early British colonial America has been compiled. In addition, the reader will find a comparable modern equivalent following each entry in order to clarify and contextualize information gathered in seventeenth century documents.

<u>Colonial Unit</u>	<u>Modern Equivalent</u>
cord	wood stacked 8'x4'x4'
cwt	hundred weight
dozen	in the amount of twelve
draft	the amount of fish caught in a single tug of a fish net
dram cup	1/16 oz., or 1/8 of a liquid ounce
ell	46 inches
firkin	6 ½ pounds, 8 gallons
flitches	an amount of bacon
hogshead	63 gallons
lot	a grouping of like items
noggin	1/2 cup

pair	two of any given item, exception being pants where a pair is one.
purchase	16 ½ feet
rick	wood stacked 4'x4'x4'
rod	16 ½ feet
Roman numerals	Arabic Numbers
I, II, III, IV, V	1,2,3,4,5
VI, VII, VIII, IX, X	6,7,8,9,10
For numbers greater than ten simply combine the appropriate root numeral with a roman value of one through nine, example: XI is 11, XLVIII is 48, XCVII is 97, and MMIV is 2004.	
XX, XXX	20, 30
XL, L, LX, LXX	40, 50, 60, 70
LXXX, XC, C	80, 90, 100
D, M	500, 1000
rundlet	18 US gallons
score	in the amount of twenty
yard	36 inches

Early court documents, such as wills, inventories, bonds, and patents, employed several legal terms and commonly used phrases known as stock phrases. The following list has been compiled to provide further clarity when reading early documents.

Addison (Addition) – a title that appears as a prefix to a man’s first name, usually signifying his rank or occupation.

A fine before such alienation – (stock phrase) a one-time fee, not unlike a surcharge or transfer tax, which was applied each time land was originally patented or sold.

Anno Domini (Annoque Domini or Annoq Domi) – year of our Lord, used to specify a year after the death of Jesus Christ.

Being sick in body but of good and perfect memory – (stock phrase) a statement made by the author of a will whereby the individual attests to his or her mental competency.

Bequeath – grant unto, give to.

Captain – a title given to either the owner or operator of a vessel, a rank in armed forces, or an honorary title.

Goods chattels rights debts and credits – (stock phrase) all that belongs to one individual.

Imprimis – firstly.

In the name of God amen – (stock phrase) expresses religious belief, usually used as the first phrase in a will.

Know all men by these presents – (stock phrase) witnesses sign/mark this document.

Made oath upon the holy evangelist – (stock phrase) swore an oath.

Mr (Mister) – a mark of distinction, not a prefix to be applied to just any man.

Possessors – usually found in the context of land, denoting ownership and the right of dominion over it.

Suma – the total, the summation.

Taxa – tax, usually used in the context of “No. Taxa” meaning tax number.

Viz – that is to say, namely.

Among other oddities found in early British colonial writing is the vast array of shorthand or abbreviations used throughout documentation. Since all early documentation was hand written any means of shortening a clerk’s written tasks was employed. Some of the more common shorthand and abbreviations are as follows:

bb^l	barrel
col^d	colored
cwt	hundred weight
d	pence
d^o	ditto
gal	gallon
hhd	hogshead
Imp^s	Impris
£	Pound, either sterling silver or local
lib	pound weight
pce	piece
p^r	pair
qtr	quarter
s	shilling
x	cross
&c	et cetera, etc.